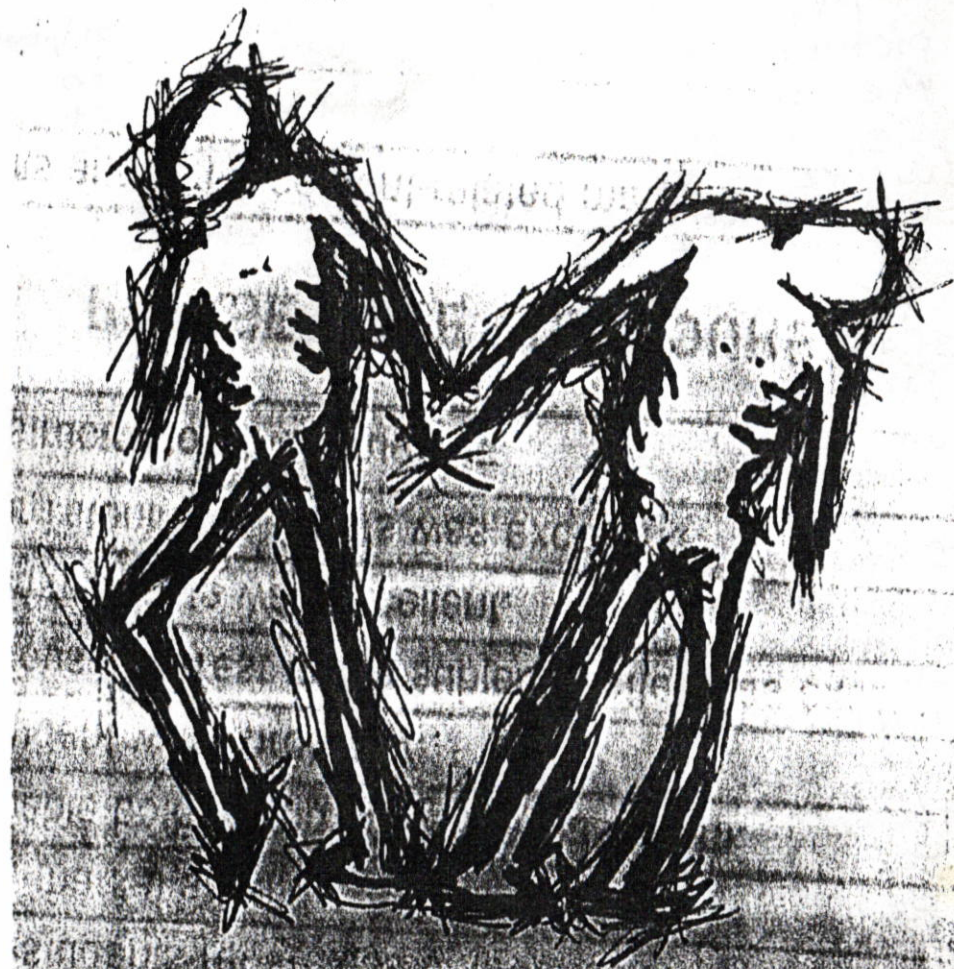




STIGMA

May 26, 1998

This is the very first issue of Stigma. It took about 3 months of writing in my journal and collecting stuff from other people to get this all put together. I basically put out this zine focusing on stories and poetry because I feel like there's more than enough zines that deal with music, band interviews, reviews, etc. I guess I'd rather read about people's personal experiences, emotions. Anyways, this is what came out.

I want to thank Jaime, Mike, and Chris for giving me poems and stories to put in here. Thanks to Lauren for drawing the front cover, and to Dave for drawing the back cover, art-work inside, giving me pictures, and hooking me up with copies of this. Check out the back page for more info...

Seth

Stigma
3912 Livingston St.
Hyattsville, MD 20781

Writer's Key

 = Mike

 = Jaime

 = Seth

 = Chris

She'll have to wait until the next time we venture down to the strange, yet exciting world of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Anyone that has any writing, art, pictures, comics ^{want} they in here send it to me and I'll try to get it in the next issue. Or, if you just want someone to write to send me a letter. I can really use art-work for Stigma #2 which will be out at the end of summer.

If you'd like to get an issue of Stigma #1 send \$2 ppd and I'll get it out to you ASAP. Stigma #2 will be the same price and if you want both send \$3 ppd.

I'm not sure about doing ads, but if anyone does a zine, or has anything non band related that they'd like to do an ad for send me ~~me~~ however much you think is fair and I'll put it in the next issue.

Thanks for picking this up. Write to Seth Stigma at 3912 Livingston St., Hyattsville, MD 20781 to order, pester, or send love letters to.

Seth

looking up waiting for some alien mothership to suck us all up.

Anyways, we finally got to where we could see the lake. We all looked at each other and were like, "Ya right, we're not going in that shit." Even Evan, the most ballsy of the bunch said, "Hell No!" Us wimps headed back to Dave's car and hung out amongst the Mack trucks. We talked about movies, school, and if there was a Jesus or god, what he looked like. We probably stood there for an hour until we thought we heard a car coming. We all dived into the car and raced away like we were being chased by a pack of rednecks.

We got back to Andy's school around 5:30 in the morning exhausted. Pat and Evan had to be back home around 10 so they passed out while me, Dave, and Andy stayed up all night. Watching Evan fall a sleep is one of the funniest things in the world. First of all, Evan is this super hyper kid on all kinds medication and he constantly rocks back in forth. Standing, sitting in the car, everywhere, all the time. Sometimes I think he's just doing it on purpose but I was wrong. He went to sleep on his stomach with his legs rocking back and forth. Then his legs would stop and that's how we knew he was a sleep.

At one point Dave asked me what time it was.

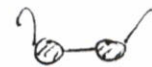
I said, "6:00."

Then Dave said, "I remember my first time. I came so fast."

"What the fuck Dave? How do you go from the time to sex?"

For the next hour me, Dave, and Andy managed to talk about sex, sex, and more sex. I guess that's what happens when you experience sleep-deprivation. I even contemplated going up to that girl Rachel's room upstairs but I figured she might think I was pretty psycho for knocking on her door at 7 in the morning. Me and Dave crashed for a half hour and then we were back on the road at 8. I sat up front slipping in and out of consciousness. Somehow Dave stayed awake the whole ride back. He dropped me and Pat off and we crashed. I later found out the cute girl liked me. Damn.

Hello



Just as I walk past Oglethorpe St.
an old Asian man walks by,
his little black slippers scratch against the cracked sidewalk.
His face.
Worn out, like the tired wickered chair in my mother's house.
I make it to the corner waiting for the bus.
The same man,
whom I see every morning,
who needs a haircut really badly,
paces back in forth in front of me.
We give each other an acknowledging nod,
say hello, and nothing more.
The cute Spanish couple,
both with matching sweaters,
appears just as the bus arrives.
I take my seat next to the door and glance at all the familiar faces.
None of whom I've ever spoken to.

The bus stops next to the liquor store
right where I started my day
It sucks me in
Screams come from the 32 oz. Mickey's bottles
"Drink me, drink me."
The two Korean men behind the counter who no longer card me say
"Two-Dolla"
I put my money down
We never say a word.
On the way back to my house
a cute little black lady in her car asks me for directions.
I try to tell her but all she says is
"I gots lost."
Finally after telling her she drives away still yelling
"I gots lost."
I continue on, facing the long tiring hill that leads me home
knowing I'll see the same people tomorrow.
Wondering
if we'll ever say more than a simple hello.

Spring Break(part 1)



Greensboro

We left yesterday around 8 in the morning for Greensboro, North Carolina. All I knew was that a bunch of my friends were going

down there for a Youth Activist Conference. I had no idea what that was except that Matt, my roommate, was taking the van and it meant I had a cheap ride to somewhere different.

Me, Pat, Dan, Young, and Matt.

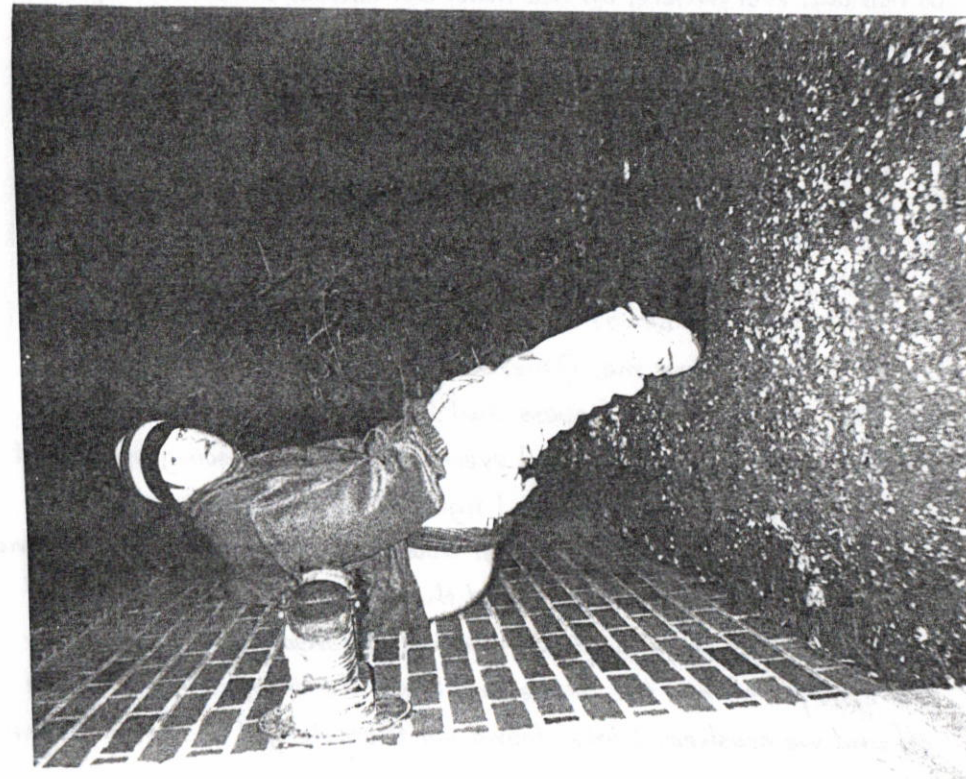
I slept for about 4 hours and then Matt and Young thought it'd be a great idea to check out Duke University. 6 years ago I would have been going crazy to be at Duke. Now I could care less, must be getting old. Turned out we drove all this way to eat at a Burger King.

Eventually we made it to University of North Carolina Greensboro. It turned out the conference was a bunch of separate meetings with fellow punkers and hardcore kids. The only meeting I went to though was on Direct Action and Protesting. I really don't have any experience with either but I actually found it pretty interesting hearing what other kids are into.

After the meeting everyone met in a little cafeteria for free vegan food. I think I was the only meat eater in the room but I could care less. I had a fakin bacon sandwich. Mmmm. Yummy. I was actually thinking about the restaurant I had seen earlier called Beef Burger and somehow the sandwich lost all of its charm.

There was a show going on that night with some hardcore bands so everyone met there. The last thing I wanted to do was be at a show because I was hoping I could meet some new people rather than just stand around and watch bands play. During the show I sat outside on a couch and watched all the kids with their SXE and vegan shirts walk by. I guess I find it kind of humorous as to why kids wear these shirts. Some sort of status symbol I guess. I'm still waiting for my "I Drink Beer" shirt to come in the mail.

After the show everyone stood around deciding what we were doing for the night. This went on for almost an hour and I got really bored so I thought it'd be cool to sing top 40 songs and see which kids were cool enough to join me. First up was, "Doo-Doo-Doo-Da-Doo-Doo Ben Folds Five. Sara and Chris joined me. Then some small punk kid leaning against the wall sang along. Up next,



students sitting down with 2 teachers leading the auction. I felt like I was back in elementary school. We'd managed to gather up 22 tickets so everytime a bid went up we'd start it by yelling, "22." But of course everyone else had way more tickets than us so were no match. We didn't care what the item was, a damn frisbee for God's sake, just something.

Finally, after an hour we shouted, "22" for the 100th time. The old guy up front said, "Going once, twice,.....,SOLD!" Our gang stood up and yelled like we'd just won a new car. The crowd roared. Probably just because they wanted us to get the hell out of there. We won a Detroit Pistons cap and some cd of a band we'd never heard of. The cd eventually ended up in the fountain.

After the auction we hung out in front of the auditorium throwing hard bagels at each other. Evan did his usual impersonations and had us all laughing. This one girl came out of the building with a bunch of balloons in her hands and Evan asked her if he could have them. He sucked the helium out of a few, let some float away, and then stuck two in his shirt and went up to guys saying, "Hey baby, I'll suck your dick." Only Evan.

Close to 3 in the morning Andy had this idea that we should go a Corey he'd been to before about 45 minutes away and we could go swimming in the lake. I was itchin' to do something else so I convinced everyone else to go. Unfortunately the two girls didn't want to go, but hey, it was boys night out, time to bond.

The car ride took forever I kept passing out, but all I could remember was that for 30 minutes we didn't see any houses, cars, nothing. We were in the middle of nowhere going to what I thought was a cool lake. Wrong. We eventually made it to the corey. We parked next to a couple buildings, some huge rock piles, massive metal machinery, and a bunch of Mack trucks. Andy pointed to where the lake was, so we followed him. It was almost pitch black and everyone but Andy was starting to chicken out. Dave brought along his hockey stick just in case anyone decided to mess with us. This place looked like it belonged in an X-Files episode. I kept



"How's it Going to Be," another classic by some crappie alternative band. Hey I only know these songs because they play them non-stop at my work. Yeah, that's it.

Finally we ended up at the house where the guys from Zegota live. They'd played up in D.C. a few times in the last couple of months and had stayed at our house so we knew them pretty well. Everyone started cookin up their tofu stir-fry and falafel and I felt so left out. There was over 20 people staying at Zegota's small town house and people had even slept on the stairs the night before so Matt was looking for another place for all of us to crash.

He ended up talking to this guy named Steve from Empire Falls, a band Crispus Attucks had played with on tour in the summer. Steve said he had plenty of room for us so we said our good-byes and headed over. We drove to the other side of Greensboro passing nothingness. Just factories and warehouses, no restaurants, nothing. I don't think we ever did find the actual town.

20 minutes later we pulled up to this big house on the corner of some lonely street. The front door read, "Hippies use side door." Wow, our kind of place. Some girl Matt knew ended up answering the door. We entered the house and we all said, "Holy shit." The living

room was huge. About the size of my house's first floor. The kitchen was big too. We headed up stairs. There were 5 bedrooms all next to one another and they were all labeled with numbers. I looked in all the rooms and they were huge. Each one was about 3 or 4 times the size of my room back home. Some hot punk girl, with the cool bleached hair in the front thing going on walked out of door #5.

I said to her, "What did this place used to be, an apartment?" Without even hesitating she said, "No, it was a whore house."

"Oh, ok," I said trying so hard not to laugh.

"That's why we only pay \$950 a month. Plus, we're fixin' to get a new roommate this week."

I couldn't believe it! She said fixin'! A punk rock girl, southern accent, in North Carolina, in an old whore house. I was in love. We all found it hysterical so Matt went all around the house taking random pictures. Meanwhile two drunk kids were wrestling next to my feet. They almost knocked the kitty litter over. A cat walked out of door #2, two puppies ran out of door #4. I was in heaven.



his shirt and the world stopped. Birds began to chirp. Church choirs sang. A Greek God stood before our eyes. Let's just say all of our mouths dropped open. This guy was huge, buff, lean, one fine ass mutha fucka. Evan stood in the pool pretending to keep his mean face. We'll just call the other guy Adonis.

Next thing I knew Adonis and Evan were jammed in the pool arm-locked when BAM! Evan was body-slammed into the jello. He squirmed away, jello flying every which way, but Adonis had him pinned on his stomach. Evan yelled, "You can't take me!" He was no match for him even though he managed to stay inside the pool. The ref said time was up and they both got out of the pool, Adonis laughing. The ref raised Adonis's hand in the air and the crowd gave a little roar. Then up went Evan's arm and the crowd gave an overwhelming roar. We patted Evan on the back and walked around school to see what else was going on.

We walked around for a little bit, watched Evan bathe in a fountain, and then went to Andy's room. On Andy's side of the room was the famous Dead Kennedy's poster. On his roommates side, posters of race cars, beer wrappers symmetrically placed on the wall, and a huge picture of Pamela Lee hanging on the wall above his bed.

We were all hungry so we drove around Fredericksburg looking for food. We drove by a scary looking diner in the middle of nowhere, stopped for a minute, and then decided it was probably a good idea to try elsewhere. While driving along the main strip I looked out of the corner of my eye and saw CiCi's. (the same place we'd ate at in Greensboro.) We plopped our 3 bucks down and stuffed our faces till we almost all puked. Back to school we went and ended up just walking around along with Andy's girlfriend and a friend of hers named Rachel who was very cute.

Finally, we ended up at a cheesy auction. Supposedly there was bunch of other events going on besides the jello wrestling and people would win tickets for each event. At least we got free bagels out of it. We entered the auditorium and there was about 100

JELLO WRESTLING

Me, Dave, Evan, and Pat were on our way to Mary Washington University in Fredericksburg, Virginia. All of us, except for Pat had been down there before to visit Andy and it had been quite boring. Before we got there we were all excited because we heard that the school was 90% girls. It turned out to be true, but they were all ugly and snotty, a major disappointment. The only fun thing was watching Evan walk into a fountain in 30 degree weather fully dressed. Oh yeah, and him walking around school the rest of the night without a shirt on yelling, "METAL!" Anyway, we were back and hoping something better would be going on in the Mecca of Virginia.

It only took a little over an hour to get to the school. Once we got there we walked towards Andy's dorm and noticed a huge crowd gathering around something. We saw Andy out there and screamed as loud as we could, "Andy, Andy!" until everyone stopped what they were doing and stared at us. We always like to show who the outsiders are.

As we got closer to the crowd we saw what all the commotion was about. There was a little kiddie pool filled with jello and people were wrestling each other inside of it. Evan, the kid who knows every professional wrestler who's ever lived and watches Nitro every Monday night, eyes lit up. Next thing I knew Evan had his shoes, socks, shirt all off yelling like a little kid, "I wanna do it!" Meanwhile the crowd was trying to get this tall shy looking kid to wrestle. The guy said no kind of embarrassed. Someone else said they needed a challenger for him and within seconds Evan was up in his face yelling, "I'll take you man!" He then started to flex his non-existent muscles while his fat started to protrude over the edge of his belt. We were all laughing hysterically along with the rest of the crowd. Meanwhile, the shy kid agreed to do it. Evan dove into the jello pool head first rubbing it all over himself waiting for his opponent....

The shy kid took off his shoes. No big deal. But then he took off

Steve told us his parents, who lived about a half hour away, were gone for the weekend and we'd be able to stay there and eat all of their food so we headed off to Winston-Salem. Steve kind of had this preppy bleached hair hardcore thing going on but he turned out to be a really cool guy. Finally after what seemed like hours, we showed up to this house in the middle of some forest area. After taking a couple steps inside I could definitely tell Steve's parents were well off. Art-work all over the walls, fancy furniture everywhere.

But a fucking room full of parrots? Yeah, parrots. Right next to the living room was a huge room the same size with big glass doors leading in. There was about 6 or 7 huge bird cages with big parrots in them. Then I started to walk around the house. 6 little parrots next to the kitchen. 4 baby parrots in the laundry room. The art-work, parrots. The plates, silverware, all damn parrots.

Finally Matt asks Steve, "What's the deal with all the birds?"

"Oh, my mom likes parrots."

Yeah, a little understatement. I felt like was in a zoo.

Finally, around 3 in the morning Steve fed us raviolis and microwavable rice and beans. He blasted Earth Crisis and drank a six pack of Schafer. Around 4:30 in the morning we all headed off to bed in Steve's old room.

Dan looked at this weird modern painting of a nude lady on some object and said, "What's up with the naked chick on a horse.?"

"Oh, that's a picture my dad drew of my mom."

"Oh, ok," we all said.

Steve turned the light off, said goodnight and shut the door. Me, Matt, and Dan laughed hysterically. What a night.

We were supposed to wake up at 7 in the morning so we could go to the rest of the conferences at the college. We woke up at 11 and then sat around for an hour while Steve and his girlfriend fed the baby parrots by hand. We showed up to the school right as they



were serving lunch. We all agreed it was great timing but after eating the uncooked vegetarian chili I had second thoughts. Damn vegan food kills me.

The conference was over so we decided it was time for the College Park punks to take on the crazy life of Greensboro. We piled 12 people in Matt's van and hit a local punk store. Everyone went crazy over the \$1 bin of records and came out with their hands full. After that we went to the saddest mall in America. There had to be about 5 stores open. Everything else was shut down and the only people I saw were in a nasty department store that had an all clearance sale. Matt and Steve skated a marble half-pipe that just happened to be on the outside of the mall. I think the cops kicked them out though.

Eventually, we all met back at Zegota's house. Everyone was itchin' to head back home so we said our good-bye's and hit the road. Before we hit the highway we all ate at this pizza place called CiCi's. All you could eat pizza for 3 dollars, plus salad and desert. We ended up staying for 2 hours. 15 smelly punks putting the place out of business. I think one of our tables ordered 5 vegetarian pizza's.

I did my best to hide everything. But I know it was all in my touch. Both my hands slightly caressed her shoulders and mid-back. I was scared to go too low. She was a fragile girl. I tried to touch her only with my nails. My fingertips sometimes slipped.

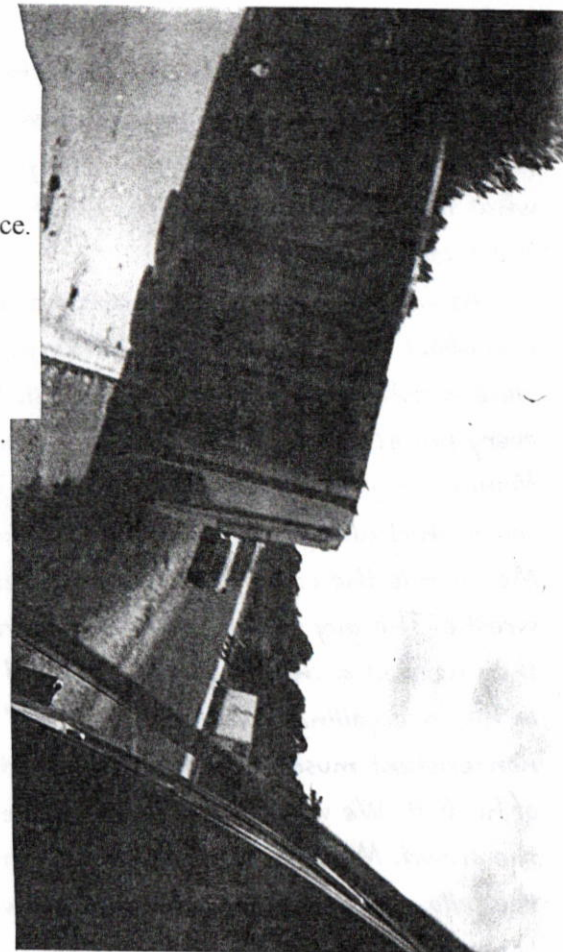
The television's filtered light was strong enough to flash within my closed eyes. It's reckless rhythm relaxed me. Slowly, I smiled.

She breathed, "It makes my skin feel so much better."

That made me feel better.

FATHER

father forgive me,
i have done much to wrong,
alienated childhood told me
i didn't belong.
the blame i put on you
the same you put
on i too
forgive my ignorance
i was much too
confused to give anyone a chance.
so many tears,
so many ill-forgotten years
i'm sorry i wasn't the
son you wanted,
i, the bastard
the demons mercilessly taunted.
did you tell me
they would be so mean?
did you tell me
life shits on a clueless teen?
did you tell me
to take a stand?
or what it means to be a man?
no, my father you never
told me
what it means to be free.
i learned on my own
how to see my
life and live it,
and even to come of age
and look at you
and forgive



The weather was permitting. The streets were slick with snow. The highway and no divider and the cars wrecked head-on. That is what it was...a wreck. And she was soft and fragile.

She was in a coma for four months. Her family might as well have been too. They only visited and cried. Her friends still drank and watched TV. Some still went to school while others moved away. Regardless, they cared even though they continued. The other person in the wreck, the one from the other car, was lucky. He died on impact. Weather was permitting. No one was to blame. But she doesn't always see it that way.

She leaned her head back with a slight turn so as to see me out of the corner of her eye.

"My skin is uncomfortable." Then she paused.

The light flashing from the television set became deafening.

She continued, "I want to take my clothes off."

With that being said, she lifted her black shirt over her head. It was dropped on the scratched wooden floor and forgotten. She stood up to take off her jeans in order to avoid difficulty. Her back was still towards me. She slightly struggled. That was all she was wearing. Ever since the accident, she never wore anything more. Never socks or shoes. Nor a bra and underwear.

Now she was naked. That made her feel natural.

I couldn't tell if she felt comfortable though.

. . .

The emptiness of the room and the glowing of the screen complimented her. The picture was right. She was beautiful and fragile.

She sat with her back towards me again. Her skin was white, stretched and scarred. I wanted to touch it.

"Feel better?" I asked indifferently. It wasn't that I cared; it was just something to say. It fit. It was bitterly quiet in the room at the moment. So I said something. Anything.

Her reply of "Yes," hardly broke the silence.

"Is it always like this?" Still, I didn't really care. I just needed to move. To get closer to her skin. The skin was uncomfortable for her. But it was beautiful.

I placed both hands on the floor and pushed myself forward across the surface. Her shoulders lay smooth, tight. My eyes were fixed.

"No," was whispered with a slow slight nod.

I barely noticed her response. I forgot about Pete across the room.

I reached out and touched her. My fingers slid against her right shoulder and over a scar. Her body flinched as she sighed.

I closed my eyes.

"Feel better?"

"Much."

Pete was motionless. Even thoughtless.

The next ten minutes disappeared.

Seven people piled into the Matt's van, 5 in the back We all sprawled out in the back, legs on top of each others. The "Appliance" sign Chris had taken from some store kept falling on Young's head. I laughed because I was the one who wanted to take it back for my room. Then the sign started falling on me and I stopped laughing. It was a pretty damn uncomfortable ride home, but at least I didn't have to drive and I got a couple hours of sleep. 5 hours later we dropped everyone off, stumbled out of the van, and me, Matt, and Dan told our funny stories to my roommates, Kate and Pat. I went to sleep looking forward to the next day's trip to New York.

THAT DAMN DOG



four a.m. and on a penal colony's cherished gift. the raddest lady, white-trash LA who gave up dope years ago for penn station beer to return home to who-cares where in illinois. cleveland here. where'd i put that girl's number? (never got it, never will) layed over but not layed. yes, screwed but in useless way. "so, ya wanna be a writer?" who the fuck am i kidding?

there's mr. junk. he likes to tell tall tales of hemorrhoids to explain 10 minute bathroom trips and ask me for safety pins to pop vitamin-e pills to rub on his skin and get lilly to read him his horoscope and talk about his life as an "audio engineer," but he knows crass from the symbol on my patch. his "bad skin" smells more like "h" than a "new natural soap" gone awry. that's why he's mr. junk. ms. white-trash thinks he should share. cute. can we be a family?

mr. clown is the new bus driver. he'll cut your earphone's wire if too loud. time to "bite the bed bugs back for the driver" to neurosis.

there's your i-o-w-a 80. looming above wendy, heightened state commercialism, tourist invitation, media fuck. the rest of iowa was corn husk country for bumpkin kin. no other reason to be there except by birth or familial bonds.

chicago, according to a 30 minute walk, stands glassy desolate. a digital ghost town of sorts.

iowa's twenty passed with a big bang. "take it baby, yeah, 80 all the way." watch the bumps, but it ain't no route 666. big fuckin snow flakes fill a heavy colossal void (nothin but space here). hey, it's good ol' mr. junk. no, i don't care about the geeks on your new bus, just the fries on my table and the somewhat "passable" girl with strandy black hair to go with her boots. bye, bye mr. junk.

i really need the holes in my shoes cause my feet might be comfortable if they could stay dry for an entire day.

cheyenne, wyoming, snowful bliss, feels like sitting back, sipping some cold ones, and slipping into a tv set. not diggin the limited moving area the individual seats, this snowy arena hasn't entertained me since 6:30 a.m. early last day of the year. roads have officially been deemed hazardous by authorities. snow chains at 25 miles per hour...in it for the long haul. befriended two canadians from quebec. punk, rockers, hipsters, alternatives, whatever. they're nice. madeleine and jif are traveling to take travel notes (the cheap ones) on san francisco for their college. lilly and i noted all the poor activities and eateries worth the time.

oakland postponed, delayed. gonna take a greyhound leave of absence at battle mt., nevada to stay with the western shoshone defense project. may get stranded and freeze in this blizzard. not a bad time to go (and we all really must at one point or another).

new year's celebration. worse than a poor man's. i'd love to be on the streets again. grab a fuckin nobody and holler, "let's rock the fuck out," and then throw in the follow up, "let's fuckin jam!" who can i grab on a rolling tin cage? we're all stuck, poked, gawked at, suffering, all cramped, sore, dirty, bitter. all stuffed, gutted and shelved. all neutered, collared, and yarded. all restless and cranky. all irritable and rising. all sleepless and groggy. all on the same ride. all in it together. all alone.

the air is so fucking stale it is sticking in my nose. goes down nauseously. breath deep fuckers, this is OUR air! it is us. our life. our lives are shit. i need a walk in a park with water (running over rocks preferably) and lots of green grass. where's whitman when ya need him?

DESTINATION RESTLESS



is it berkeley? punx? people in general? or me? the kids here are so fucking stupid. they are physically, mentally, absolutely, plain old stupid. how much metal can be worn in hair, on neck, around wrists, pierced through skin, and stuck on clothing? how many stitches, or is it the patches that really matter? how many beers can be consumed in a small artistic and political hot bed of a city? how many drugs should be snorted and swallowed (last year's "spun" canceled for texas pill poppin).

how many fucking trends can you keep up with?

it's too easy to feel a little superior when all the people are highschool losers; if not that, then they can relate to and act it.

good things: pigeons flying circles in people's park, charlie from new york, andrew (if you can get in touch with him--which i haven't), sean from virginia, abundance of shows, uh...it really sucks that i'm having trouble even thinking of something, anything.

so many nice people shot to hell on the image look act. on a drug. on a shitty "cool" trend. on a dead life cause that's all they think they can know. i'm glad i'm somewhat intelligent, but life really is too easy for the dolls.

"the revolution will not be punk rock."

yeah, that's what i say if these kids are going to have anything to do with it.

Peter couldn't take his eyes off her. Ever since freshman year in high school he had a crush on her. She was beautiful.

I couldn't help but notice Pete. Flashy. Slick. He was playing smooth tonight. He was from Philly, and it showed. His jeans were beginning to rip in each rear pocket. The side he put the wallet in was worse than the other. That side only carried a small comb, just in case. He was leaning against the wall and began to slowly slide down. His knees were stiff and hurt as they bent.

She sat in the room. It was uncomfortable. The room. The air. And her. Her skin was uncomfortable and that was because of the accident. That was a bad day.

This room seemed empty. It was uninviting to the three of us. Pete sat in the distance against the wall. He was below an opened window. A white sheet replaced the curtain. Every so often it moved from a breeze. I sat on my knees with my feet pointing out. I was in the doorway which connected the living room to the kitchen. The living room had a hard wood floor, all scratched in various directions. And the kitchen was the dirtiest part of the house. It always is. She sat about three feet ahead of me and was facing Pete. Her arms wrapped around her folded legs. Her hands were clasped and her chin rested in the space between her knees. She subtly rocked.

The television was on. But the volume was broken. It was an old black and white TV with no sound. It had always been like that. The only other object in the unfit room was a moldy smelling sofa. It was missing cushions. The ones it had were ripped and dirty. It was always empty with no one sitting on it.

No one was speaking

No one was watching TV.



Her rocking became uneasiness. And it increased. For the first time someone spoke. It was her.

She was short and small and fragile. The accent and tone of her words may lead you to believe she was a tough girl. But she was indeed fragile. Her hair was black with red highlights. It was long and braided. There was nothing natural about it.

She was studying to become a hair stylist. That was something she was good at. Unlike high school (for she never went further than that), it didn't involve words or numbers. Nothing factual and concrete...or solid. With hair it was always questionable. A preference. But never a right or wrong thing. Hair is soft, manageable, and fragile. If you don't take care of it then it will leave you. Not like the words and numbers though because those aren't personal. Maybe that's why she dropped out.

Something was solid in her life. It wasn't always that way though. Not like the sink. Or the TV and sofa. She used to be young, innocent, and independent. She used to be comfortable. And was once happy. That was before the accident. The wreck. It happened the way to learn about managing and maintaining hair.

emptied my poison
put the bottle back down
he didn't even flinch

"Hey fucker, wut yuuu starin at?,"
I slurred.

His eyes fixed on mine like a magnet
I continued in the
Old Western Staredown

meanwhile, my hand
swam through the pile
of wrinkled papers
next to my bed

came upon the headline on
the front cover of the Washington Post
it read,

"TEACHER MURDERED BY FIRST GRADE STUDENT"

I rolled up the paper
spun it around my index finger
and placed it in my invisible holster
in my drunk cowboy accent I said,

"Now partna, I'm gonna giv yuu
to the count of ten to mosey on
outta here."
"10,9..."

SMACK!

I unrolled the paper
black blood and
two eyelash legs
covered the
"RED"
in
"MURDERED"

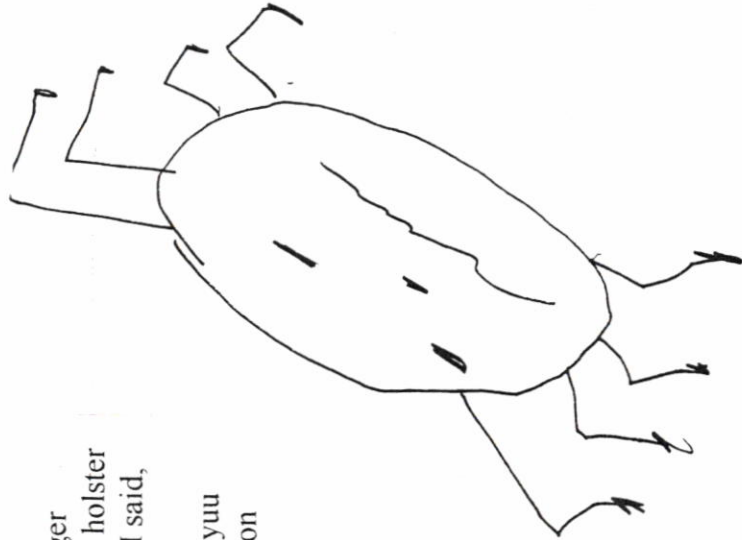
did it feel good to kill?
"Yea, it felt real good."

EXPLOSION

See, this is how I remember it.
You sitting across the aisle
on an orange Red Line bench,
looking at the right side
of my face
through red prescription sunglasses,
foot wagging at the end
of a perfectly erved log.
Me sitting on a yellow
Red Line bench,
looking at my tattered shoe,
untied lace tucked by chance
into the crack between
Achilles and shoe-back.
Other passengers,
three with newspapers,
two with headphones,
one with a carton of eggs.

You giving apologies, condolences,
the kind that made me want to
put your head through the window.
Me, powerless to move,
apparently dead since a night
three months before.
Me, angry, leaving at the
wrong stop hearing something
about living 'til death.

Me walking up the escalator
on the left side with
a dog-eared farecard,
shoelace catching at the last step.
Me stopping before the turnstile,
looking back at passengers who
stumbled on the last step,
one showing the eggs
smashed.



WORK



I find it funny how as a society we place so much importance on work. Maybe it's because we live in a capitalistic country and everyone's so worried about making so much money. Regardless of the reason I don't understand..

We spend close to half of our lives working and for what? I mean, yes, some people love their jobs and may really like the people they work with and are content with where their life stands. But it seems like so many other people hate their jobs and can't stand the people they work with. And they have to work because they have bills to pay, responsibilities to take care of. It just seems to me sometimes like we're wasting our lives away. Think of all the places in the world, all the people whom we'll never meet because we're stuck to our jobs.

I remember talking with my Dad late one night a couple of years ago about this. He told me how it comes down to choices people want to make. He said I could just travel and not work, but that eventually I'd run out of money and have nothing to fall back on. On the other hand, I could work my whole life, always have security, and what? Stay in the same place? Wake up at the same time everyday, follow the same routine until I'm too old and dependent on money that I can't change?

And I don't even have a solution to the problem. I guess the best way is to even both out. I still don't think it's fair, but I guess life isn't fair. I just know there's so many places I want to go, so many people I want to meet, so much I want to learn. I don't want to end up like so many other people I know.



Why I Killed the Spider



he sat there
his little black hind legs
holding up his toothpick like body
his beedy eyes staring in my direction
my eyes stayed glued to Bukowski's "war"

reached my hand out
to take another
swig from the 200 ml bottle of Bacardi Limon
and noticed him
sitting behind the glass
his eyes now the size of marbles

"Oh, I see, wut's up George."

She continued rambling on about her evening continually crossing her eyes to check out how George was doing. I was trying desperately to keep a straight face.

At one point George was actually hanging half way off the bill of the cap. I think I heard him say, "Save me Seth, this bitch is fuckin crazy." She caught him just in time saying, "Uh uh, George, you get back up there."

Poor fella I thought. She finally left me alone and I had to work the rest of the day with a vision of a short stubby girl with crossed eyes, with a green worm hanging on the top of her cap. It's been over three weeks and I haven't seen her at work since. I'm just wondering if George made it out alive.

Want

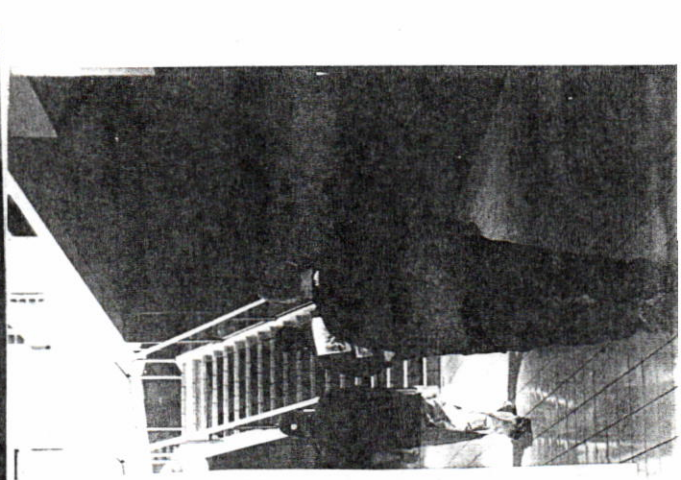
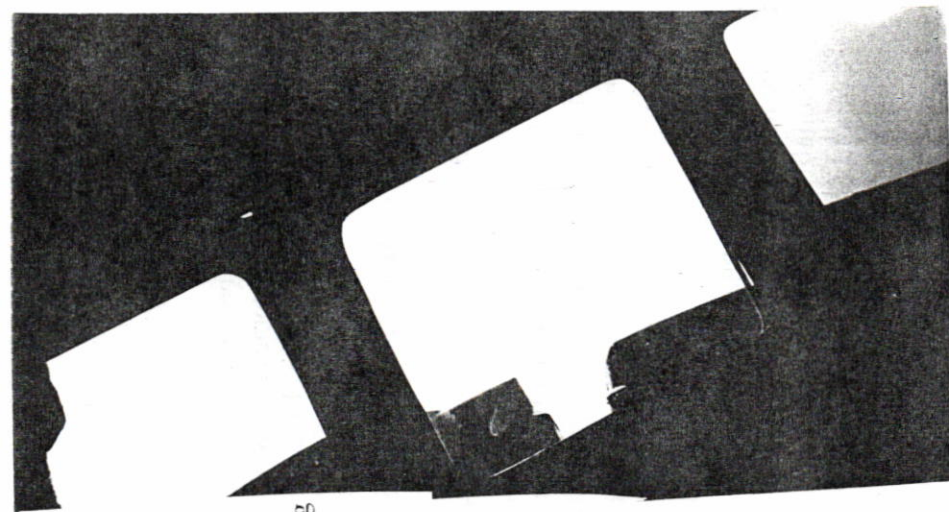


I want to live
I want to travel
I want to leave everything
I want to love and be loved
I want to, for once in my life
be able to shave without cutting myself
I want to yell at the wanna-be
pseudo intellectuals in my English class
I want to tell you everything
I want no one to understand me
I want my '76 rusted Datsun B210 back
I want to write the perfect song
I want to know why the hell I'm here
I want to write a great story
I want to write a non-symbolic poem
for the kids in my English class
to chew on
I want my old parachute pants and Breakin' shirt back
I want to be happy when I look in the mirror
I want to Scream so loud
no one can hear me

Sometimes



Sometimes I'm sad because
I haven't slept in days
and I think about things too much
Sometimes I'm sad because I work
at a job(s) I hate because I work
for fascist employers who serve everything
I stand against and I feel like I'm
selling myself out.
Sometimes I'm so sad because I don't
hate work but work jobs I hate
because without a college degree
I can't make enough money at
any other job to survive in a
capitalistic society.
Sometimes I'm sad because mommy
and daddy don't have any money to
give me and I'm sad because that
means mommy can't do any of the
things she loves and daddy won't ever
be able to retire.
Sometimes I'm sad because I wish
I was a naive, stupid happy 7-year old
but I wasn't happy then because
the rich kids called me names like
"chink" and thought it was funny that
I had applesauce and microwave sausage
for dinner last night.
Sometimes I'm sad because I think
my poetry sucks
Sometimes I'm sad because I
think I suck
Sometimes I'm sad because they
can't relate. Because they ask
me what's wrong and I tell them
and they say "uh, huh, uh, huh" and they
are thinking about what time Springer
is on.
Sometimes I'm sad because I do
drugs.
Sometimes I'm happy because I do
drugs.
Sometimes I'm sad because I get
jealous and feel like I'm the



asshole,-paramoid,-selfish-dick for brains boyfriend type that I always mocked in high school. Sometimes I'm sad because I look in the mirror and don't recognize myself. Sometimes I'm sad because I wish the happier things to come are now. Sometimes I'm sad because I have nothing else to say.

You Have to Love Something



Without the love of something there is no reason to live. Whether it is music, a girl, a boy, a car. If it's sex, surfing, or hating. If it's living life it self. Or even if it's taking life away, everyone has to love something. When you love something, you get an ecstatic feeling about it, you are forever drawn to it. Maybe even obsessed. Everyone loves differently. For something you love you would go to X-treme ends, sacrifice almost anything to get the mental or physical climax that satisfies you. Yes, it is blinding, causing us to do things we ordinarily wouldn't do, but love is the most wonderful instinct of humans. It follows both planes of rationality and Irrationality. It is happy, tragic, despairing, full of hope, free and costly. If you are alive and do not love something you are dead already.

You Have To Love Something.

CRAZY



I'm sitting here.Sick.Drunk. Your sitting across the room and I can't even get you to look over. Everyone has come over to talk to me, everyone but you. Last week I was lying in your bed and I felt like I could tell you anything. I thought maybe you could do the same, but I think I was just anyone that would listen.

When I'm alone with you your one person. When people are around you act like I don't exist. I try to call you and I have nothing to say. I wish I could just say how I feel and lay it all out. Instead I have to play these games and pretend like I'm not interested just so I can find out if you are. I told myself that if I saw you tonight I wouldn't pay attention. It didn't work. You were standing next to me and I kept talking, but I wasn't saying anything. Everything I

She ran away yelling, "He said yes, he said yes!"

A couple days went by and I hadn't seen her so I was beginning to think things were looking up. I was wrong. I had to work on a Saturday by myself. Normally there's about 4 people working in the general books department but on the weekend it's really slow so only one person comes in and it was my turn to work this Saturday. I was typing something up in the computer when all of the sudden she appeared before me on the other side of the counter with her white U of Maryland baseball cap on.

"Hey Seth. How ya doing?"

"Um, I'm ok," I said trying to keep the answers down to as few words as possible.

"Oh, I feel so good. I had some Jack Daniels last night and I feel so good."

"That's nice to know."

This is when things began to get really strange. Her eyes did the strangest thing. They crossed each other and looked up towards her forehead. If you don't understand what I'm talking about get a friend to take his or her index finger, put it on their nose and tell them to look up. Now tell me that doesn't look funny. She then proceeded to say,

"So, what do you think of George?"

"Huh?"

"George.... do you like him?" her eyes crossing again.

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"George, what do you think of him?"

Totally clueless to what she was talking about I said, "You mean the piece of grass on your hat?"

"No, silly, that's not grass, it's George, he's a lime worm."

I squinted my eyes to look closer and noticed she had a tiny light green worm hanging out on the bill of her cap. Like the kind you find on your arm after sitting in the grass. This girl was starting to scare me and I still had 6 hours of work left.

George



It all started on a Saturday night. I was at McDonald's with some friends. We headed out the door and this girl sitting down at a table near the door said to me, "Hey aren't you in my math class?"

"I don't know. Am I?" I never recognize girls that I don't normally talk to unless they're attractive. She wasn't.

"Yeah, you are, how'd you do on the test?"

"Not good, well look I gotta go so yeah, I'll see ya around."

At the time I didn't think much of it. A couple days later I was at work and I saw the same girl working at the security desk. I never even knew she worked at the book store. Once she saw me she ran up to me and reached her hand out and grabbed my name tag. I started to step backwards not used to someone I barely knew grabbing my shirt. "Oh, your name's Seth." Feeling like it was my responsibility I said, "So what's your name?" She told me but it flew through one ear and out the other.

A couple days later I was shelving books at work. As I put a book away in the Current Affairs section I heard this baby like voice say, "Hewwo Seff." I looked up above the top shelf and noticed a tiny little figure moving his arms. He kind of looked like the character on the stupid da da da commercial. A couple seconds later the girl popped her head up and said, "Hey, how ya doing?"

"Alright," I mumbled as I headed back to the cart to get more books. 5 minutes later I was putting a book away in the science fiction section and I saw the same stupid little figure pop up on the other side saying in the baby like voice, "Hewwo Seff." Jesus, I thought, this girls weird, but I kind of ignored her and continued on. She eventually left me alone.

A couple hours later I was putting some other books away and she sneaked up behind me and said, "Will you marry me?"

"Oooooooooooooooooooooo? This wasn't a yes, it was a question, like what the fuck are you talking about freak."

wanted to tell you I couldn't. You said you'd call me today. I folded, and called you first and had nothing to say. I wish I could just get you alone, not feel like I have to say something to fill up the conversation. Be able to stare at you and have you not think I'm a freak for doing so. You just do the same and we lie there silent. My head hurts. Your driving me crazy.

one fuckin doughnut shop of a town memphis is. carpeted in streets and decorated with agonizing boxes of redyellowgreen. the lights are everywhere and give no guidance to newcomers. union street could drive the best thinkers and rationalizers mad.

this is truly the south. the kids take pride in a childish and harmless manner of their placement. with the wind chill, the weather is just about freezing. there's lots in river city doughnuts: brian, author of cheap trucker speed fanzine, gave the night some jazz. he is a likable and non-obnoxious sean white. angel is a horrible counter attendant, but she's real pretty. lee, from copout, does not like religious freaks and is one helluva scary looking father. matt has purple hair and let us sleep on his floor with brian. smoked some weed with lee, ceylon (whose relatives live by seaside heights in nj) and chery, a nicely normal looking girl who lives in a cold room). they're a band called f.n.d.

a cute girl with short blueish hair, home-sewn tight black pants with white stitching, a born against patch on her bag, and a black sweatshirt with a rad rites of spring patch on it came in from goth night with matt. she was from little rock. she was hella cute with such a sweet southern accent. after visiting little rock and discovering nothing, i can see why she moved here.

the doughnut shop is the punk house--a home away from home. after talking christianity over with a converted ex-coke head, adulterer, and father of a bastard baby, i watched the shop get locked up with the punks still inside. for the rest of the night. kids, punks, could freely come and go from the shop. they've taken it over and it's been like this for years. it is like our michae's pizza in middletown.

brian has a plethora of photos. all the girls are really pretty, why? also, actually got to listen to elvis last night, memphis is cool.

WHERE WORDS HIT CLOSE



this is it. this is the feeling i have been looking for. i'm all alone, a-l-o-n-e. on the metro. headed for greenbelt station. home. i can feel home. and i do feel home. for over three weeks it has been begging, scraping, grubbing, thanking, debating, walking, starving, traveling, speeding, hiding, and anything but sleeping. everywhere but here. everything but home.

she got left at union street. yes, it is sad, but liberating. now, i have that feeling. this must be how aaron feels pulling up to the oakland greyhound terminal. time to rest, eat, sit, sleep, and construct. silence the raid sirens and leash the hounds. alone with my hemlock, i'll be home soon socrates, but don't wait up.

Tonight/Friends



I should be writing my Shakespeare essay for my English class, but I can't do it. 4 in the morning and I only have one page left, but it seems so meaningless. No feelings. Just writing to get a good grade. Get me to that next class. "That's the spirit."

All these thoughts going through my mind. Most of it has to deal with me realizing that at this point in my life I feel really close to some people. More than I've ever felt. I don't even know if they realize it because half the time I'm too busy keeping myself so distant. Afraid of letting people know who I really am. It can be the smallest things my friends do, yet they mean so much.

For instance, tonight I asked Jaime to read this poem I had written. I'm always asking him to read my stuff because he writes a lot and he and I tend to think about the same things a lot of the time. I ended up just giving him my whole journal. He went downstairs and got out his journals of poems he had written in the last 5 years. We sat in my room reading each others stuff.

Jaime read a few and said, "You know, I think we see eye to eye on a lot of things, but sometimes I feel like I see the jar half-full where as you see it half-empty."

Without even thinking about it I said, "You probably right."



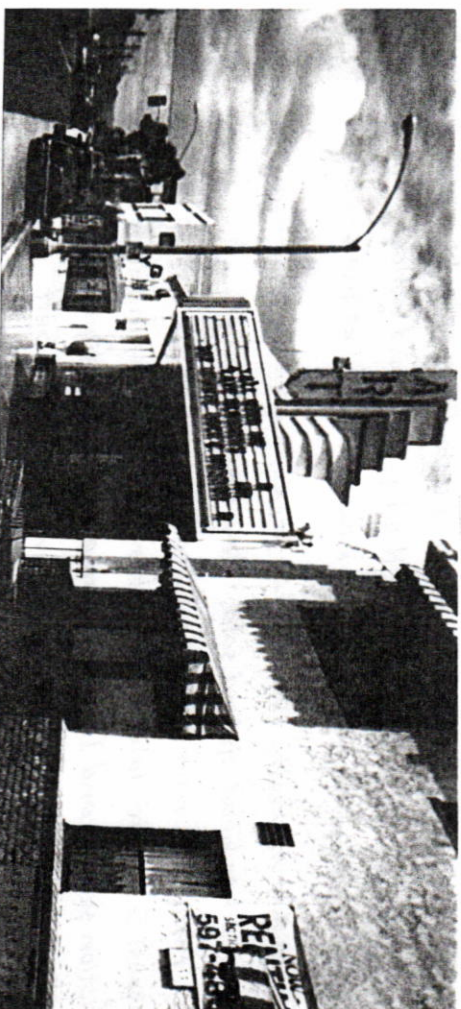
I'm not a sailor
I could end them all if I could get them
alone and in the right mood

I'm the captain
my mark would be on them,
they would think about me at every restaurant
they went to in their cars at home
at work in bed with spouses or first
time lovers on vacation on the radio
I'm the captain.

Her eyes look at mine with a pitiless
love, the kind you can only get
in a plutonic environment.

Many people owe their lives to her
eyes at that five second interval.
They can go pay money downtown
to catch their deaths.

"You alright?"
touching the top of my wrist.
For a friend I take a vow of
silent celibacy, dying uncelebrated
when I could have been
the captain.



back-stepping in a crazy rushing pushy cold concrete city. doors flying. taxis accelerating. garbage keeps accumulating while watching the pick-pockets working. buses start arriving just as the train is departing. only right back. just right here. merely starting all over. returning to go. returning back to where i started from when i had wet feet and doubled calculations. lilly is dead, and her journal is all that is left.



I started coughing.
"I hate when you're sick,"
says my friend.
I can't wait for the next time.

We drive to Fridays to get a drink.
We park far away and walk across
rows of cars, one has a
Victory records sticker one
a small Confederate flag on the grill.
Waiting to be seated are about
ten people.

One fat guy bends to pick up
change and his hairy butt pokes
out above his elastic.
One girl gives us a bitchy look
and walks to her Jeep.
One boy grabs his girlfriend
by the elbow and tugs her
roughly to the door.

In the restaurant it smells
funny and I feel tired and
all I want is a water.
I start to shiver and my
friend looks at me like
maybe I should be put in a bubble,
with her wide green eyes and
hair that curls around her ear.
La Bamba starts playing on the overhead.

I'm not a sailor.
That fat guy is eating a huge plate
one table over, growing his butt.
Richie whathisname died a long time
ago and he still gets played at
Fridays in Rockville.

I'm not a sailor
I see fear in my friend's eyes,
I feel fear from everyone present
I'm not a sailor,
I start to feel extremely potent
like maybe they're afraid of me
and maybe for a reason,

My dad said the same thing to me a year ago. I just
ignored him and walked away. I don't know if it's because I
feel so uncertain about my life, my future... I hope I snap out
of it soon. Someone like Jaime telling me that makes me
step back and look at myself.
Thanks.

Dave calls me up at 1 in the morning. "Is it cool if I come
over?"

"Yeah, of course," I reply knowing something's wrong.

It's always like this with me and Dave. We've both always
been there for each other, able to bitch at one another,
able to tell each other why we think girls are so impossible
to figure out. Why people are so fucked up. Dave went
through this time when he was always calling me up. Asking
for advice, what he should do. I tried to tell him what I'd do,
reCapping on all my previous mistakes that I'd continued to
make over and over again in life. Then I told him that'd he'd
better be there for me when I was going through this shit.
But it seems like we're always going through the same
things, dealing with the same problems and when I think
about it he has been there. I don't know what I'd do
sometimes if I didn't tell someone about all the shit going
through my head. I feel so lost sometimes. But I guess
knowing that other people do too helps me get through it.

I call Dave up late. "Hey, you doing anything? Do you want to
hang out?"

Dave knowing something's wrong says, "Yeah I'll be over in
a little bit."

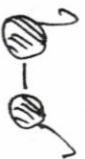
Thanks.

I know you've heard that saying, "The friends you meet in

college will probably be your friends for life." I never thought about it much before now, but it's so true. People I used to be friends with in high school, I know I'll never know them ten years from now. But the people in my life now, I know we'll change, move away, move on, but somehow we'll always be friends. We'll think about those times back in college when we were so unsure of what was going on, what the future held in store for us, and realize that we wouldn't have gotten through it without each other.

Spring Break (Part 2)

New York



Monday....

side note: names in this piece have been changed to protect the safety of certain individuals.....

We were supposed to leave for New York around 11 in the morning, but Dave called and said he and Mary were running a little late. I sat around on the couch playing guitar till they finally showed up at 4:00. I couldn't complain though, at least I didn't have to take the bus like I had previously planned on doing. I barely even knew Mary. She was down in Greensboro with us but I didn't really say much to her. She sure could drive though. 3 and a half hours and we were already in New York. Seeing Manhattan at night while on the freeway is one of the coolest things I can think of. You see all these massive buildings spread all over the island and somewhere inside, below the buildings, lies millions of people, thousands of Grocery/Deli's, millions of yellow taxi cabs; take everything there is in this world, crumble it up, and chuck it down onto Manhattan Island. That's New York.

We ended up at Fordham University. Mike, a friend of Dave's who I'd met a few times went to school there and he had offered to put me and Dave up for the next couple of nights. Dave had a good

"I said, Wuts a Wawa?" this time the voice even scarier sounding.

Evan shot back, "It's a pedal. See," posing like Van Halen soloing singing "Wuuweeeeeeee."

This continued to go on. Everytime, we heard her say, "What's a Wawa" we took a step back and said we didn't know. Finally, we got our sandwiches and left. On the way out mama' was yelling at the woman behind the counter, "Wuts a Wawa!"

.....to be continued

WHEN I LEARNED TO HATE "LA BAMBA"

I was riding shotgun up 355 in Rockville, headed to Tower Records, counting stoplights, debating whether or not to count each pair as one.

At the tenth (or twentieth)

I started searching the radio.



"I'm not a sailor..."

I'm the captain I'm the captain I am the captain..."

When the song stopped we were in the parking lot. I got out and lit a cigarette, heading for the bench in front of The Container Store. The strip mall lights were giving off that yellow flicker, casting shadows that looked like hunchbacks but came from two payphones.

The record store was boring, we left in about five minutes. I put on the radio, "I'm not a sailor..." click.